

Amendments to the Specification:

Please replace paragraph [1003], with the following rewritten paragraph [1003]:

[1003] The trend in branch prediction techniques is to increase both the amount of work performed by processors and the amount of information maintained by processors. As a result, modern branch prediction techniques and implementations ~~ten~~ tend to increase the area of processors consumed by a branch predictor for logic and storage of history and/or prediction information. Although branch prediction can provide substantial performance improvements, increases in the amount of circuitry and logic area consumed by branch prediction storage can be significant and costly.